

Glossary

A

Abortion The expulsion or extraction of the products of conception from the uterus before the embryo or fetus is capable of independent life. Abortions may be spontaneous or induced. Spontaneous abortions are commonly called miscarriages. Induced abortions are voluntary interruptions of pregnancy or therapeutic abortions. Incomplete abortion occurs when some products of conception, usually the placenta, remain inside the uterus. Missed abortion is when the fetus has died in utero and some or all of the nonliving products of conception remain in the uterus. See miscarriage.

Abscess A localized collection of pus.

Abstinence Refraining from sexual intercourse.

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) A disease defined by a set of signs and symptoms, caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), transmitted through body fluids (e.g., semen, blood) and characterized by compromised immune response.

Adenopathy Any disease of the lymph nodes or glands, characterized by swelling.

Adhesion Abnormal sticking together of body tissues, usually by bands of scar tissue that form between two tissues following inflammation.

Adolescence The transition period between puberty and adulthood; the teenage period.

Adnexa The appendages and accessory organs of the uterus, including the ligaments, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and abdominal cavity.

AIDS See Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

Amenorrhea The absence or suppression of menstruation. This state is normal before puberty, after menopause, and during pregnancy and lactation.

Amniocentesis Removal of amniotic fluid from the uterus. This procedure may be done to determine fetal chromosomal and biochemical abnormalities, fetal maturity, or fetal sex.

Amnion The inner membrane that forms a fluid-filled sac surrounding and protecting the embryo or fetus. The amnion and the chorion together are called the fetal membranes or the bag of waters.

Ampulla The wide upper end of the vas deferens. Also refers to the widening of the fallopian tubes.

Androgen A natural steroid hormone found in males and females. It is responsible for producing masculine characteristics (e.g., deep voice, facial hair) by stimulating the sex organs of the male. Androgens are produced chiefly by the testes but also by the adrenal cortex and the ovaries.

Anemia A condition in which the quantity of red blood cells per unit volume of blood is below normal levels.

Angioedema A localized edema caused by dilation and increased permeability of the capillaries.

Anorgasmia Inability to have an orgasm. Also called preorgasmia.

Anovulation Temporary or permanent cessation of ovulation.

Anteverted Tipped or tilted forward, as an anteverted uterus.

Artificial insemination Introduction of semen into the uterus or oviduct by other than natural means.

Aspiration Removal of contents from a body cavity by suction.

Azoospermia Absence of sperm in semen.

B

Bacterial vaginosis (BV) Disease of the vagina caused by infection with certain bacteria.

Band-aid surgery A tubal ligation procedure done through an incision small enough to be covered with a band-aid.

Barrier method A contraceptive method that establishes a physical barrier between the sperm and ovum, e.g., condom, diaphragm, foam, cervical cap. Some of the barrier contraceptives are used in conjunction with a spermicidal agent.

Bartholin's glands Small glands found on either side of the vaginal entrance that secrete small amounts of lubricating fluid. Also called vestibular glands.

Basal body temperature method (BBT) A method of fertility regulation that uses daily temperature readings taken immediately after waking to identify the time of ovulation: approximately 24 hours after ovulation, the BBT increases. See periodic abstinence.

Billings method See periodic abstinence.

Bimanual examination Two-handed examination of the pelvic structures performed by inserting gloved finger(s) of one hand into the vagina and/or rectum, while pressing with the other hand on the lower abdominal wall.

Biopsy Removal of tissue from a living body for diagnostic purposes.

Biphasic Two different phases, as in biphasic basal body temperature. A rise in temperature in the second half of the cycle that indicates ovulation has probably occurred.

Birth rate (or crude birth rate) The number of live births per 1,000 of the mid-year population in a given year. Compare with growth rate and death rate.

Breakthrough bleeding Bleeding at a time in the cycle other than the menstrual period. See menorrhagia and metrorrhagia.

Bulbourethral glands See Cowper's glands.

C

Caesarean section (also Cesarean) Surgical delivery of a baby through an abdominal C-section.

Candida A genus of yeast-like fungi. Candida is part of the normal flora of the skin, mouth, intestinal tract, and vagina but may cause disease when it grows to outnumber the other normal flora. See moniliasis.

Cannula A hollow tube for insertion into a body cavity.

Capacitation The process by which sperm become capable of penetrating an egg, which occurs in the female reproductive tract.

Carcinoma A new cancerous growth originating in any of the epithelial tissues of the body and characterized by invasive growth and rapid spread to other parts of the body.

Castration Removal of the gonads (testes or ovaries).

Cautery Use of heat, electricity, or chemicals to destroy abnormal or excessive tissue.

Cervical cap Small latex or plastic cap that covers the cervix. Users of this barrier method of birth control must spread spermicidal cream or jelly inside the cap.

Cervical crypts Small indentations that line the length of the cervical canal and contain mucus; may serve as a reservoir for sperm.

Cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN) A sexually transmitted disease exhibiting early cancerous or precancerous changes of cervical epithelial cells. See dysplasia.

Cervicitis Inflammation of the cervix most commonly due to infection, exposure to chemicals (e.g., spermicidal agents), foreign bodies (e.g., cervical caps, tampons), or partially expelled intrauterine devices.

Chancro The primary lesion of syphilis, which appears as a hard, painless sore or ulcer often on the penis or vaginal tissue.

Chancroid A sexually transmitted disease caused by the *Hemophilus ducreyi* bacterium and characterized by a soft sore on the genitals, which becomes painful and discharges pus.

Childbearing years The reproductive age span of women, assumed for statistical purposes to be 15 to 44 years in the United States. In other countries, the range is often set at 15 to 49 years.

Chlamydia trachomatis A microorganism that can cause vaginitis, urethritis, cervicitis, pelvic inflammatory disease, and lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV). Also called chlamydia, mucopurulent cervicitis, and nongonococcal urethritis (in men). Symptoms include cervical discharge (yellow or green), redness, ectopy, tendency to injury, and white blood cells on microscopic evaluation of cervical secretions.

Chloasma Splotchy, brownish skin discoloration associated with high estrogen levels. May affect oral contraceptive users. Also called mask of pregnancy.

Circumcision In males, surgical removal of the loose skin (foreskin) covering the end of the penis. Often performed shortly after birth. In females, surgical excision of part or all of the clitoris and/or labia minora.

Climacteric A prolonged period of time during which there is a decrease in estrogen production, characterized by a decrease in the frequency of ovulatory cycles and partial atrophy of secondary sexual characteristics. Within that time span, the woman stops menstruating; this event is called the menopause.

Climax See orgasm.

Clitoris A small, pea-sized, hooded, erectile body located on the vulva above the vagina. It is situated between the labia minora in front of the urethra. It is the anatomical equivalent of the penis in the male and is highly responsive to sexual stimulation.

Cohort A group of people experiencing an event (births, marriages, etc.) at the same time who are observed through time.

Coitus Entry or penetration of the penis into the vagina. Also called intercourse or copulation.

Coitus interruptus Removing the penis from the vagina just prior to ejaculation. Also called withdrawal or pulling out.

Colposcopy Technique of viewing the cervix and vaginal mucosa magnified 10 to 20 times normal size, making it possible to see structures invisible to the naked eye.

Colpotomy Incision through the lateral fornices or posterior fornix of the vagina into the cavity surrounding the uterus and adnexal structures.

Conception Generally the beginning of pregnancy. Conception is usually equated with the fertilization of the ovum by the sperm, but is sometimes equated with the implantation of the fertilized ovum in the uterine lining.

Condom A barrier method worn during intercourse as a method of contraception and as a prophylactic against sexually transmitted disease. *Male:* A cylindrical sheath of latex, plastic, or sheep intestine worn over the penis. *Female:* A closed-end tube of plastic placed inside the vagina.

Condyloma Wart-like skin growth that may appear on the internal and external sex organs or anus caused by the *Condylomata acuminata*, a sexually transmitted condition caused by the human papillomavirus. *Condyloma acuminata* infections may lead to cervical, vulvar, and penile cancer. Also called venereal warts, flat condylomata, HPV warts, and papillomavirus warts.

Congenital Existing at, or before, birth.

Contraceptive prevalence rate A measure of the extent of contraceptive practice among a defined population group at a point in time. The numerator and denominator generally come from household surveys with the numerator consisting of the number of defined women estimated to be practicing contraception, including male-oriented methods.

Contraindication A medical condition that renders a course of treatment (that might otherwise be recommended) inadvisable or unsafe.

Corpus luteum Hormone-producing cells that develop from the ovarian follicle once a ripened ovum has been expelled. It produces progesterone to prepare the endometrium for implantation. If conception does not occur, the corpus luteum degenerates, leaving visible scars called the *corpora albicans*. If pregnancy does occur, the corpus luteum persists and functions through the first half of pregnancy.

Cowper's glands Small glands at the base of the penis which secrete lubricating fluids into the urethra. Also called bulbourethral glands.

Crabs See pediculosis.

Cryosurgery An operation that employs extremely decreased temperatures, achieved through liquid nitrogen or carbon dioxide, to destroy diseased tissue such as precancerous abnormalities of the cervix or vaginal walls, or warts on the vaginal walls, vulva, or cervix.

Cul-de-sac The closed pouch located between the anterior surface of the rectum and the posterior surface of the uterus.

Culdocentesis Aspiration of fluid from the space behind the uterus by puncture of the posterior vaginal wall or cul-de-sac. Removal of tissue by scraping with a spoon-shaped instrument called a curette. Used to remove the endometrial lining of the uterus. Also called a D&C, dilation and curettage.

Cyst A walled sac containing gas, liquid, or semi-solid material.

Cystocele Bulging of the bladder into the vagina.

Cytology Study of cells.

Cytomegalovirus A virus related to the herpes virus, capable of producing a sexually transmitted infection which is usually asymptomatic but may result in nonspecific febrile illness, pneumonitis, hepatitis, or mononucleosis.

D

D&C Dilation and curettage; dilation of the cervix with use of a sound or laminaria, and scraping of the uterine lining. This procedure is often used during abortion.

D&E Dilation and evacuation; dilation of the cervix and evacuation of the uterine contents using vacuum techniques.

Death rate The number of deaths per 1,000 of the mid-year population in a given year. Compare with growth rate and birth rate.

Demographic transition The historical shift of birth and death rates from high to low levels in a population. The decline in mortality has historically preceded the decline in fertility, resulting in rapid population growth during the transition period.

Depo-Provera Injectable form of medroxyprogesterone acetate; see injectable contraceptives.

Diaphragm A soft, rubber, dome-shaped device worn over the cervix and used with spermicidal jelly or cream for contraception. Diaphragms are circular, shallow, rubber domes with a firm but flexible outer rim. They fit between the posterior vaginal wall (posterior fornix) and the recess behind the pubic arch.

Diathermy Heating of body tissues due to their resistance to the passage of high-frequency electromagnetic radiation, electric currents, or ultrasonic waves. In medical diathermy, tissues are warmed but not damaged; in surgical diathermy (electrocoagulation), tissues are destroyed.

Dilation (Dilatation) To stretch beyond normal dimensions, usually in the context of the cervix. The instruments most commonly used to dilate the cervical canal are called Hegar dilators. Laminaria are also used to dilate the cervix.

Distal A location farthest from a point of reference; opposite of proximal.

Douche Cleansing the vaginal canal with a liquid; not an effective means of STD prevention.

Ductus deferens See vas deferens.

Dysmenorrhea Painful menstruation. Usually cramping midline lower abdominal pain. May be associated with low back pain, nausea, diarrhea, or upper thigh pain.

Dyspareunia Difficult or painful sexual intercourse.

Dysplasia Abnormal development of cells or tissues. Dysplasia, as a Pap smear diagnosis, corresponds to Class III or cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN).

Dysuria Painful or difficult urination.

E

Eclampsia Generalized seizure related to pregnancy occurring after the 24th week of gestation. Eclampsia is usually accompanied by high blood pressure, edema, and protein in the urine. See pre-eclampsia and toxemia.

Ectopic Out of place; an ectopic pregnancy occurs when the embryo implants outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tube. Much less commonly, implantation may occur in the endocervical canal, on the ovary, or within the abdominal cavity.

Ectropion The turning outward of tissue margin, as may occur on the cervix. Cervical ectropion can precede cancerous changes but may also occur under other circumstances such as during use of oral contraceptives.

Edema Excessive fluid retention, swelling.

Egg An ovum; a female gamete; an oocyte; a female reproductive cell at any stage before fertilization.

Ejaculation Expulsion of semen from the penis. See orgasm.

Embryo The developing conceptus through the first seven to eight weeks of gestation, after which it is called a fetus. See fetus.

Emergency contraception Methods used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected intercourse; e.g., hormones, IUDs, and prostaglandin suppositories.

Emergency contraceptive pill A method of using higher doses of birth control pills following unprotected sexual intercourse. ECPs are a temporary method that would ideally lead to regular contraceptive use.

Endocrine glands Ductless glands that secrete hormones into the blood stream. See exocrine glands.

Endometriosis A condition in which endometrial glands are present outside the uterus in abnormal locations such as the tubes, ovaries, peritoneal cavity and bowel; produces abnormal vaginal bleeding and dysmenorrhea. It may also produce abdominal, pelvic, or rectal pain.

Endometritis Inflammation of the endometrium or uterine lining.

Endometrium The mucous inner lining of the uterus.

Enteric infections A group of sexually transmitted infections caused by the bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and organisms that produce intestinal disease.

Epididymis A coiled tubular structure where sperm cells mature and are nourished, and which connects the testes to the vas deferens.

Episiotomy An incision in the perineum to facilitate passage during childbirth while minimizing injury to the woman.

Erection Hardening of the clitoris or penis caused by a rush of blood during sexual excitement.

Estrogen The primary female hormones; any natural or artificial substance that induces estrogenic activity, more specifically, the hormones estradiol and estrone produced by the ovary. Estrogens are produced chiefly by the ovary but also by the adrenal cortex and the testis.

Exocrine glands Glands that secrete substances, such as tears or saliva, through ducts to surfaces and organs. See endocrine glands.

F

FDA Food and Drug Administration in the United States. This agency must approve drugs used in the United States; many other nations follow the dictates of the U.S. FDA.

Fecundity The physiological capacity of a woman, man, or couple to produce a live child. See fertility.

Fertility The actual output of births, as opposed to the potential output.

Fertility awareness A method of birth control in which a couple charts cyclic signs of the woman's fertility and ovulation, using basal body

temperature, mucus changes, and other signs to determine fertile periods. See periodic abstinence.

Fetus The developing conceptus after 7 to 8 weeks postfertilization (the end of the embryonic period) until birth. See embryo.

Fibroadenoma Benign breast tumor(s).

Fibrocystic breast disease Benign breast tumor(s) involving multiple cysts in the terminal ducts and acini of the breast. Also known as cystic mastitis, chronic cystic breast disease, cystic hyperplasia, and cystic adenosis.

Fibroids Tumors of the muscle and connective tissues of the uterus that usually remain benign. Also called myomas (or myomata) and leiomyomas (or leiomyomata).

Fibromyoma A tumor composed of both fibrous and muscular tissue.

First trimester The first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

Follicle A small secretory sac or cavity. One type of follicle is an ovarian follicle, which is a very small sac in the ovary in which an ovum matures and from which the egg is released.

Follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) Anterior pituitary hormone that stimulates the ovary to ripen egg follicles. FSH stimulates sperm production in the male testes.

Forceps Grasping instrument used to facilitate delivery or rotation of the baby's head; other forceps are used to grasp other tissues, cotton balls, intrauterine devices, etc.

Foreskin A retractable fold of skin over the head of the penis. It is removed during circumcision.

FSH See Follicle stimulating hormone.

Fundus The part of a hollow organ farthest from its opening. The fundus of the uterus is farthest from the cervix.

Fungal infection See moniliasis.

G

Gardnerella See Bacterial vaginosis.

General fertility rate Live births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years in a given year.

Gonad An organ that produces sex cells (e.g., the testis and ovary).

Gonadotropin A substance having an affinity for, or a stimulating effect on, the gonads. There are three varieties: anterior pituitary, chorionic (from pregnant women's urine), and equine (from the serum of pregnant horses).

Gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH) A hormone released from the hypothalamus that signals the pituitary gland to release the gonadotropin's luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle stimulating hormone (FSH).

Gonorrhea A common sexually transmitted infection characterized by a pus-like discharge from urethra or cervix and caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, a gram negative diplococcus. This infection is also called GC, clap, the drip, and gonococcus.

Granuloma A growth or chronically inflamed area; usually firm, nodular, and containing macrophages.

Granuloma inguinale A sexually transmitted infection that is characterized by single or multiple subcutaneous nodules that erode to form ulcers, caused by the bacterium *Calymatobacterium granulomatis* (formerly called *Donovania granulomatis*).

Gravid Pregnant.

Gravidity The number of pregnancies.

H

Hematocrit The volume percentage of red blood cells in whole blood.

Herpes A group of contagious viral diseases that can cause sores on the mouth or the genitals. The ulcerous sores on the genitals can increase the risk of HIV transmission.

Human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) A glycoproteinaceous hormone produced by the placenta, which maintains the corpus luteum and causes it to secrete estrogen and progesterone. Measured in urine and blood to detect pregnancy.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) The virus that causes AIDS. It causes a defect in the body's immune system by invading and then multiplying within white blood cells.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) A genus of viruses that includes those causing papillomas (small nipple-like protrusions of the skin or mucous membrane) and warts in humans.

Hydrocele Swelling of the scrotum due to fluid build-up in the sac of the membrane covering the testicle.

Hymen A membrane that partially covers the entrance to the vagina. Through history, an intact hymen has been equated with virginity; however, hymens may tear for a number of reasons other than intercourse.

Hypophysis The pituitary gland.

Hypothalamus Part of the brain just above the pituitary, which helps to regulate basic functions such as sleep, appetite, body temperature, and fertility. The hypothalamus is influenced by levels of the brain and controls hormone production by the pituitary.

Hysterectomy Surgical removal of the uterus.

Hysteroqram An X-ray of the uterus or record of the strength of uterine contractions.

I

Implantation The process whereby an ovum six or seven days after fertilization burrows into the lining of the uterus and attaches itself firmly. Successful implantation is essential to the development of the embryo.

Impotence Inability to have or sustain an erection.

Infant mortality rate The number of deaths among infants under 1 year of age in a given year per 1,000 live births in that year.

Infertility Failure, voluntary or involuntary, to produce offspring. Primary infertility: The woman has never conceived despite cohabitation, exposure to the possibility of pregnancy, and the wish to become pregnant for at least 12 months (World Health Organization definition). Secondary infertility: The woman has previously conceived but is subsequently unable to conceive despite cohabitation, exposure to the possibility of pregnancy, and the wish to become pregnant for at least 12 months (WHO).

Informed consent Explanation to a patient of a diagnostic or therapeutic approach so that the patient may make a rational decision about it. Components of informed consent include explanation of the benefits, risks, and alternatives of an approach; the opportunity of the patient to ask questions and decide whether to proceed with the approach; detailed instructions; and documentation that those steps have been carried out.

Injectable contraceptives Hormonal contraceptives given by injection. Two examples of injectable progestins are Depo-Provera (DMPA or medroxyprogesterone acetate) and norethindrone enanthate.

In situ Confined to place of origin with no spread to other tissues, e.g., carcinoma in situ.

Intrauterine device (IUD) A flexible, usually plastic device inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy. May contain metal (generally copper) or hormones for added effectiveness. It produces a local sterile inflammatory response caused by the presence of a foreign body in the uterus, which causes lysis of the blastocyst and sperm, and/or the prevention of implantation. IUDs may also prevent fertilization due to damaging effects on spermatozoa as they pass through the uterus.

Introitus The opening of the vagina to the outside.

In vitro Outside the living organism and in an artificial environment.

In vitro fertilization A procedure in which an egg is removed from a ripe follicle and fertilized by a sperm cell outside the human body. The fertilized egg is allowed to divide for about two days and then is inserted back into the uterus of the woman.

Involution The return of the uterus to a normal, nonpregnant size after parturition.

IUD See Intrauterine device.

L

Labia A lip or lip-like structure. The labia majora are folds of skin on either side of the entrance to the vagina and are covered with hair in most adult women. The labia minora are the smaller hairless folds of tissue just within the labia majora.

Lactation The secretion of milk. The ideal means for most women to feed their newborn infant. Breast milk transfers immunoglobulins, albumin, vitamin B12 binding globulin, lactobacilli, lactoferin, macrophages, neutrophils, complement, lactoglobulin, and certain medications and drugs from mother to infant. Lactation can produce anovulation.

Laminaria A plug of sterile dried kelp (seaweed), which expands when wet. It is often used to dilate the cervix.

Laparoscopy Surgical inspection of the abdominal cavity and pelvic structures through a narrow lighted tube.

Laparotomy A surgical incision into the abdomen.

LH See Luteinizing hormone.

Libido Sexual drive. See orgasm.

Lice See pediculosis pubis.

Life expectancy The average number of additional years a person would live if current mortality trends were to continue. Most commonly cited as life expectancy at birth.

LMP Last menstrual period. Often used to calculate length of pregnancy.

LRF analogs Numerous synthetic chemical substances similar to naturally produced luteinizing hormone releasing factor (LRF), a hypothalamus-controlled secretion from the anterior pituitary gland. They are under study as contraceptives and agents to treat infertility. See GnRH.

Luteinizing hormone (LH) Anterior pituitary hormone that causes a follicle to release a ripened ovum and become a corpus luteum. In the male it stimulates testosterone production and the production of sperm cells.

M

Mammary glands Glands from which milk comes during breastfeeding.

Mammography X-rays of the breast to detect abnormal tissue.

Marital fertility rate Number of live births per 1,000 married women aged 15 to 44 years in a given year (usually reported as rates within specific age groups).

Mask of pregnancy See Chloasma.

Mastalgia Breast discomfort or pain; there may be accompanying breast fullness or enlargement.

Mastectomy Surgical removal of the breast; simple mastectomy removes only breast tissue while radical mastectomy includes removal of lymph nodes and chest muscles.

Masturbation Stimulating one's own sex organs for pleasure.

Maternal mortality ratio The number of deaths to women due to pregnancy or childbirth complications per 100,000 live births in a given year.

Menarche The beginning of menstruation; i.e., the first menstrual period. This occurs during puberty but may not signify the beginning of full adult fecundity because ovulation may be irregular or absent for some time. Early cycles tend to be anovulatory; however, there are reports of pregnancy prior to menarche.

Menorrhagia Increased amount of menstrual flow, but not greater than 7 days in duration. See metrorrhagia.

Menopause Cessation of menstruation. After menopause, a woman is permanently sterile. Surgical menopause refers to the removal of a woman's ovaries before natural menopause occurs.

Menses Menstrual flow.

Metrorrhagia 1. Increased duration of menstrual flow beyond 7 days, or bleeding between periods. See menorrhagia. 2. Postpartum uterine hemorrhage due to insufficient contraction of the uterine muscles.

Minilaparotomy Female sterilization procedure in which the fallopian tubes are ligated or cauterized through a small abdominal incision.

Minipill An oral contraceptive containing no estrogen and generally less than 1 mg of a progestational agent per pill.

Miscarriage Spontaneous abortion before the fetus is viable. See abortion.

Mites See scabies.

Mittelschmerz Lower abdominal pain associated with ovulation; this pain occurs in the middle of the cycle. The LH peak-induced rise in prostaglandins causes contractions of the fallopian tube, uterus, and/or gastrointestinal tract. The pain of mittelschmerz may also be due to a chemical peritoneal irritation caused by bleeding from the ovulation site or pressure from the expanding follicle.

Moniliasis Infection caused by yeast-like organisms, usually in the vagina and the vulva or under folds of skin in other areas. Usually, the organism is *Candida albicans*. Also called candidiasis, monilia, *Candida albicans*, fungus infection, and yeast. Yeast infection causes a thick, white discharge; itching, redness, or swelling around the labia; and sometimes itching and redness on the upper thighs. Some women have no symptoms at all. Men may be symptom-free or may develop urethritis, sores on the penis, or inflammation of the tip of the penis.

Monophasic A one-level basal body temperature (BBT) curve demonstrating no rise in temperature during the menstrual cycle. Suggests anovulation.

Morning-after birth control See Emergency contraceptive pill.

Morning-after pill A hormonal drug that temporarily disrupts the uterine environment to prevent implantation of the fertilized egg if taken within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse. Morning-after pills may also prevent ovulation.

Morning sickness Nausea of pregnancy.

Mucus method A method of birth control in which a couple charts the cyclic changes in cervical mucus patterns and abstains from intercourse during fertile days. Also called ovulation method or Billings method. See Periodic abstinence.

Multipara A woman who has had two or more pregnancies resulting in viable fetuses.

Mycoplasma Mycoplasma are the smallest free-living organisms, somewhere between viruses and bacteria in size. In adults most illnesses caused by mycoplasma are thought to be sexually transmitted. The two genital mycoplasmas found in the reproductive tract of all sexually active men and women, *Mycoplasma hominis* and *Ureaplasma urealyticum*, are poorly understood at present. In women, mycoplasma have been associated with vaginitis, PID, fever following abortion, fever following delivery, spontaneous abortion, low birth-weight infants, infertility, pyelonephritis, and ectopic pregnancy.

Mycoses Infections caused by fungi.

Myometrium The muscle layer of the uterus.

N

Neonatal Pertaining to the first four weeks after birth. Early neonatal: pertaining to the first week after birth.

Node A small, circumscribed swelling or knot of cells.

Nongonococcal urethritis (NGU) Bacterial infection other than a gonorrheal infection, often associated with chlamydia, with manifesting symptoms of discharge, dysuria, and itching.

Nullipara A woman who has never delivered a live infant; also written Para 0.

O

Obstetrics That specialty of medicine caring for the management of pregnancy and its complications.

OC See Oral contraceptives.

Oligomenorrhea Infrequent menstrual flow, with intervals between menses longer than 37 days and shorter than 90 days. Also scanty menstrual flow and irregular intervals are common.

Oocyte The ovum or egg cell in the female.

Oophorectomy Surgical removal of one or both ovaries.

Oral contraceptives (OC) Various progestin/estrogen or progestin compounds in tablet form taken sequentially by mouth; the pill. Estrogenic and progestational agents have contraceptive effects by influencing normal patterns of ovulation, sperm or ovum transport, cervical mucus, implantation, or placental attachment.

Orgasm A series of muscular contractions in the genital and pelvic areas that occurs at the peak of sexual excitement, resulting in a release of sexual tension. Also called climax.

Osteoporosis An abnormal softening, porousness, or reduction in the quantity of bone, resulting in structural fragility. Causes appear to include estrogen deficiency, thyroid imbalance, calcium deficiency, prolonged immobilization, and adrenal hyperfunction, which result in more bone resorption than formation.

Ovaries The female gonads; glands where ova are formed; also the primary source of the female hormones estrogen and progesterone.

Ovulation The release of an ovum from the ovarian follicle in the ovary during the female menstrual cycle. See periodic abstinence methods, mucus method.

Ovum The egg cell.

Oxytocin A hormone produced by the pituitary gland. As the baby suckles, impulses are sent to the posterior pituitary. The hormone oxytocin is released causing the milk let-down reflex. Oxytocin also causes the uterine muscles to contract.

P

Palpation Feeling with the hands to determine information about the condition of the body.

Panhysterectomy The surgical removal of the uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes.

Papnicolaou smear (Pap smear) A screening test for cervical cancer in which cells scraped from the surface of the cervix are placed onto a slide. The Pap test may also detect cancer of the uterus, ovary, or vagina; infections; or the level of estrogenic stimulation of the cervix.

Papillomavirus warts See condyloma.

Parity The number of live births a woman has had; a woman of zero parity has had no live births, a woman of parity one has had one live birth, etc.

Parturition The act of giving birth.

Pearl index The number of pregnancies per 100 woman-years exposure, usually used as a measure of contraceptive failure.

Pediculosis pubis Infestation of the pubic area with pubic lice. Pubic lice are parasites, small blood-sucking insects much like head lice. They are usually transmitted by sexual intimacy but may be spread by sharing clothing or a bed with an infected person. Also called crabs, papillons d'amour, and Phthirus pubis.

Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) Inflammation of the pelvic structures, especially the uterus and tubes. The precipitating or contributing cause quite often is a sexually transmitted infection, such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, or both. Also called pelvic infection, polymicrobial pelvic infection, tubal infection, and salpingitis.

Perinatal The time period from the 28th week of pregnancy to 4 weeks after birth. May be defined as the time period from the 28th week of pregnancy to 1 week after birth.

Periodic abstinence methods Contraceptive methods that rely on timing of intercourse to avoid the ovulatory phase of a woman's menstrual cycle; also called fertility awareness or natural family planning.

1. The basal body temperature (BBT) method uses daily temperature readings to identify the time of ovulation.

2. In the ovulation or Billings method, women identify the relationships of changes in cervical mucus to fertile and infertile days.

3. The sympto-thermal method charts changes in temperature, cervical mucus and other symptoms of ovulation (i.e., intermenstrual pain).

Peritoneum The strong, smooth membrane that surrounds and contains the abdominal organs. Often is punctured in illegal procedures, resulting in infection and often death.

Pessary A device placed in the vagina or the uterus to support pelvic structures or prevent pregnancy. The diaphragm is a modern form of a pessary. Also a medicated vaginal suppository.

Pituitary gland A small gland located at the base of the brain beneath the hypothalamus; serves as one of the chief regulators of body functions, including fertility. Most endocrine glands in the body are controlled by the pituitary. Also known as the hypophysis.

Placenta The circular, flat, vascular structure within the pregnant uterus, which provides nourishment and eliminates wastes for the developing embryo and fetus and is passed as afterbirth after the baby is born.

PMS See Premenstrual syndrome.

Postpartum After childbirth.

PPNG Penicillinase-producing *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*; a penicillin-resistant strain of gonorrhea.

Preeclampsia See eclampsia and toxemia.

Pregnancy wastage Occurs when the woman is able to conceive but unable to produce a live birth. Pregnancy wastage occurs when pregnancy ends in miscarriage, stillbirth, or a nonsurviving premature infant.

Premature Occurring before the proper time. A premature infant is one born before 37 weeks of gestation, or sometimes arbitrarily defined as an infant weighing 1,000 to 2,499 grams (2.2 to 5.5 pounds) at birth. In some countries where adults are smaller than in the United States, the upper limit is 2,250 grams. Other criteria such as crown-heel length (less than 11.5 cm) have been used.

Premature ejaculation Ejaculation that occurs too rapidly relative to a standard set by a man or his partner.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) A set of physical and emotional experiences which may occur during the period prior to menses. Symptoms may include the following: breast fullness and tenderness, headache, weight gain, bloatedness, thirst, increased appetite, acne, lower back pain, cramping, lower abdominal pain, clumsiness, fear of losing control, violence, irritability, outbursts of crying, fatigue, depression, suicidal ideas, confusion, increased sexual desire, forgetfulness, mood swings, hyperactivity, and a craving for sweets, salt, and alcohol.

Prenatal Existing or occurring before birth.

Preterm An infant born at any time before 37 to 38 weeks of gestation.

Primagravida A woman who is pregnant for the first time.

Progesterone A steroid hormone produced by the corpus luteum, adrenals, or placenta. It is responsible for changes in the uterine endometrium in the second half of the menstrual cycle, which are preparatory for implantation of the fertilized ovum, development of maternal placenta after implantation, and development of mammary glands.

Progestins A large group of synthetic drugs that have a progesterone-like effect on the uterus.

Prolactin A hormone produced by the anterior lobe of the pituitary gland that stimulates milk secretion. As a baby sucks the breast, impulses are sent from the areola of the nipple to the vagus nerve and then to the anterior pituitary. The anterior pituitary secretes the hormone prolactin, which stimulates glands in the breast to produce milk. The anterior pituitary and prolactin are thought to be important in the long-term maintenance of milk secretion.

Prostaglandin Prostaglandins are produced as the endometrial lining degenerates and may cause mild to severe menstrual cramps, diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. Oral contraceptives diminish the prostaglandins released by the endometrial lining, decreasing menstrual cramps in users.

Prostaglandin inhibitors Drugs that inhibit or suppress the action of prostaglandin. These drugs are helpful for dysmenorrhea.

Prostate A male organ, surrounding the neck of the bladder and urethra, that contributes acids and enzymes to the seminal fluid.

Proximal A location that is near to a point of reference; opposite of distal.

Pruritus Itching.

Pseudotumor cerebri A condition caused by cerebral edema in which increased intracranial pressure causes headaches, nausea, vomiting, and papilledema without other neurological signs.

Puberty The age when sex organs become functionally operative and secondary sex characteristics develop. For a girl, puberty means producing an ovum, and for a boy it is manufacturing spermatozoa. Secondary sexual characteristics in girls are breast development, enlargement of the hips, and development of axillary and pubic hair. In boys

they include appearance of pubic, facial, and axillary hair; growth of the penis, testicles and scrotum; and deepening of the voice.

Pubic lice See Pediculosis pubis.

Puerperium The six weeks after childbirth. Also called postpartum period.

Purulent Containing or producing pus.

R

Retroversion Bent backward on its vertical axis, i.e., retroverted uterus; also called tipped uterus. This is a normal variant occurring in approximately one-fifth of women.

Rhythm See Periodic abstinence.

Rubber See condom.

S

Salpingectomy Surgical removal of the fallopian tubes.

Salpingitis Inflammation of one or both fallopian tubes causing lower abdominal pain, tenderness, and cervical discharge. See pelvic inflammatory disease.

Scabies A contagious skin disease due to a mite that burrows beneath the skin causing intense itching. Also called mites and *Sarcoptes scabiei*.

Scrotum The external pouch containing testicles in men.

Semen The thick, whitish fluid, which normally contains sperm and seminal secretions and is ejected during ejaculation.

Seminal vesicles Two glandular structures located behind the prostate gland, which secrete a component of semen.

Seminiferous tubules Convoluted tubules in the testicles that produce sperm.

Sepsis (also Septicemia) The presence of various pathogenic bacteria or their toxins in the blood or tissues, resulting in chills and fever. See toxic shock syndrome.

Seroconversion When a person infected with HIV has detectable antibodies in his/her blood.

Sexually transmitted infection (STI) An infection that is communicated primarily or exclusively through intimate sexual contact. Sexually transmitted infections have been estimated to cause from 20% to 40% of infertility in the United States. STIs can adversely affect fertility by three primary mechanisms: pregnancy wastage, prenatal deaths, and damage to male or female reproductive capacity. Also called venereal disease or VD.

Sign Any objective evidence of a disease, as opposed to the subjective sensations (symptoms) perceived by the patient.

Sonogram Sound echo images of soft internal structures. Also called ultrasonography, can be used to determine size and position of the fetus, the placenta, a developing follicle, or a tumor.

Sounding Introducing an elongated probe called a sound into the uterine cavity to measure its dimensions.

Speculum An instrument for viewing the inside of the vagina and the cervix, or any other canal or cavity.

Sperm Male spermatozoa.

Spermatocele A swelling in the scrotum that occurs when the epididymis becomes cystic.

Spermatogenesis The formation of spermatozoa.

Spermicide A chemical substance that kills sperm, particularly foam, creams, jellies, and suppositories used for contraception. The spermicides used in almost all currently marketed spermicides are surfactants, surface-active compounds that destroy sperm cell membranes.

Spinnbarkeit A test to determine cervical mucus viscosity. A thread of cervical mucus is stretched between two glass slides (or two fingers) and its length is measured. The time at which it can be drawn to maximum length (lowest viscosity) usually precedes or coincides with the time of ovulation.

Spotting A small amount of bleeding at a time in the cycle other than menses; light irregular flow, often prolonged. Also called metrorrhagia.

Stable population A closed (no migration) population with an unchanging age distribution caused by unchanging age-specific fertility and mortality rates, and consequently an unchanging rate of growth.

Stationary population A stable population with a rate of growth of 0%.

STD See sexually transmitted infection.

Sterilization (tubal ligation, vasectomy) A surgical procedure that leaves the male or female incapable of reproduction. Sterilization is the most commonly employed method of birth control in the world.

Steroidogenesis The natural production of steroids. The usual progression of hormones is from progesterone and other progestins to androgens to estrogens.

Stricture Tightening or narrowing of a duct or hollow organ.

Subcutaneous Beneath the skin.

Suppository A medicine placed in a body orifice to dissolve and sometimes to be absorbed. Birth control suppositories contain spermicidal chemicals. They dissolve inside the vagina leaving spermicide to kill sperm.

Surgical menopause Removal of a woman's ovaries before natural menopause occurs.

Symptom Subjective evidence of disease or the condition of the patient. See sign.

Symptothermal method See periodic abstinence methods.

Syndrome A set of symptoms, which together characterize a condition or disease.

Syphilis A sexually transmitted infection caused by *Treponema pallidum*, a spirochete with 6-14 regular spirals and characteristic motility. The primary stage is characterized by a painless chancre. The secondary stage is characterized by rash, mucus patches, and condylomata lata. The latent stage has no characteristic sign but sequelae include tabes dorsalis, general paresis, thoracic aortic aneurism, aortic insufficiency, and localized gumma formation.

T

Telangiectasia A permanent dilation of blood vessels that create small red lesions in the skin or mucous membranes.

Teratogenic Tending to produce anomalies in formation, as in physical defects of the fetus in utero.

Testosterone Male sex hormone produced in the testes.

Term An infant born any time from the beginning of the 38th week (260 days) to the end of the 41st week (287 days) of gestating hormone.

Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) Anterior pituitary hormone that stimulates the thyroid gland.

Thyroid function tests Tests done to assess the function of the thyroid. Modern assessment of thyroid function is relatively easy utilizing radioimmunoassay of free T4 (thyroxin), TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), and T3 (triiodothyronine).

Tipped uterus See retroversion.

Total fertility rate (TFR) The average number of children that would be born alive to a woman (or group of women) during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates of a given year.

Toxemia A term applied to hypertension, albuminuria, and edema when found in pregnancy. The condition usually develops after the 20th week of gestation or early in the presence of trophoblastic disease. It can lead to convulsions. Also known as preeclampsia.

Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) A severe illness characterized by a sudden high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, aches, and a sunburn-like rash. The disease usually occurs in menstruating women using tampons; thought to be caused by a vaginal infection with *Staphylococcus aureus*. See sepsis.

Trichomoniasis Infestation of the vagina with microscopic protozoan organisms called trichomonads resulting in irritation, itching, redness, an objectionable odor, pain, frequency of urination, and/or a yellow-green or a whitish-gray, foul-smelling, watery or frothy discharge.

TSS See Toxic shock syndrome.

Tubal infection See pelvic inflammatory disease.

Tubal ligation A surgical procedure in which the fallopian tubes are cut, tied, or burned to prevent the passage of ova. It does not interfere with menstruation or sexual capability but should be regarded as a permanent form of sterilization. Also called TL and sterilization.

Tubal patency Unobstructed fallopian tubes.

Tubal reanastomosis A surgical procedure in which the cut ends of the fallopian tube are brought together.

U

Ultrasonography See sonogram.

Ureter Tube that transports urine from the kidneys to the bladder.

Urethra The tube that drains urine from the bladder to the outside of the body. In women, the opening of the urethra is between the clitoris and the vagina. In men, the urethra travels the length of the penis transporting both urine and semen.

Urinary tract infection (UTI) Infections of the urethra, bladder, ureters, kidney; often associated with trauma from diaphragm use, other barrier methods, and frequent intercourse. Symptoms include lower back pain and painful urination.

Uterus The hollow, pear-shaped, muscular, elastic reproductive organ where the fetus develops during pregnancy.

V

Vacuum aspiration Removal of tissue by the creation of negative pressure through the removal of air.

Vagina The 3- to 5-inch long muscular tube leading from the external genitals of the female to the uterus. The external opening called the introitus, may be diminished by a membrane called the hymen. Sometimes called the birth canal, the vagina is the passageway through which babies are born and menstrual fluid flows. The vagina widens and lengthens during sexual arousal.

Vaginal hysterectomy Surgical removal of the uterus through the vagina.

Vaginismus Painful, spastic, usually involuntary contraction leading to constriction of the female pelvic muscles, which can occur during intercourse or during a pelvic examination. It tends to occur when a woman senses that something is about to penetrate the opening of the vagina.

Vaginitis Inflammation of the vagina. Often caused by a change in the vaginal environment by factors such as foreign bodies (tampons, cervical caps), trauma, broad spectrum antibiotics, extensive douching, IUD expulsion, certain systemic diseases, obesity, excessive moisture, tight clothing and a number of infectious agents.

Vaginosis See bacterial vaginosis.

Varicocele Dilated varicose veins in the spermatic cord. This condition usually presents as a baggy swelling of the scrotum. It may be a cause of infertility.

Vas deferens The tube through which sperm pass from the epididymis to the ejaculatory duct and then into the urethra. It is this tube that is cut in the male sterilization procedure called a vasectomy. Also called ductus deferens.

Vasectomy A surgical procedure in which segments of the vas deferens are removed and the ends tied to prevent passage of sperm. Vasectomy should be regarded as a permanent form of sterilization although reversal is possible.

Venereal disease (VD) See sexually transmitted infection.

Venereal warts See condyloma.

Vulvovaginitis Inflammation of both vulva and vagina.

W

Wassermann test The original blood test for syphilis. Since the Wassermann test is not syphilis specific (other diseases can cause a positive test), newer tests for syphilis (specific for the agent *T. pallidum*) such as VDRL, FTA, and RPA, have been developed.

Withdrawal See coitus interruptus.

Withdrawal bleeding Menstrual bleeding that occurs when the level of hormonal support to the endometrial lining decreases.

Y

Yeast See *Candida* and moniliasis.

Z

Zero growth A population neither growing nor shrinking.

Zygote The fertilized egg before it starts to divide.

